



FOREST LEGACY

VaULT Federal Grant Series

Feb. 15, 2023

Department of Forestry, Rob Farrell and Andrea Reese

Piedmont Environmental Council, Kim Biasioli

The Conservation Fund, Heather Richards and Natasha Skelton



Forest Legacy Program overview

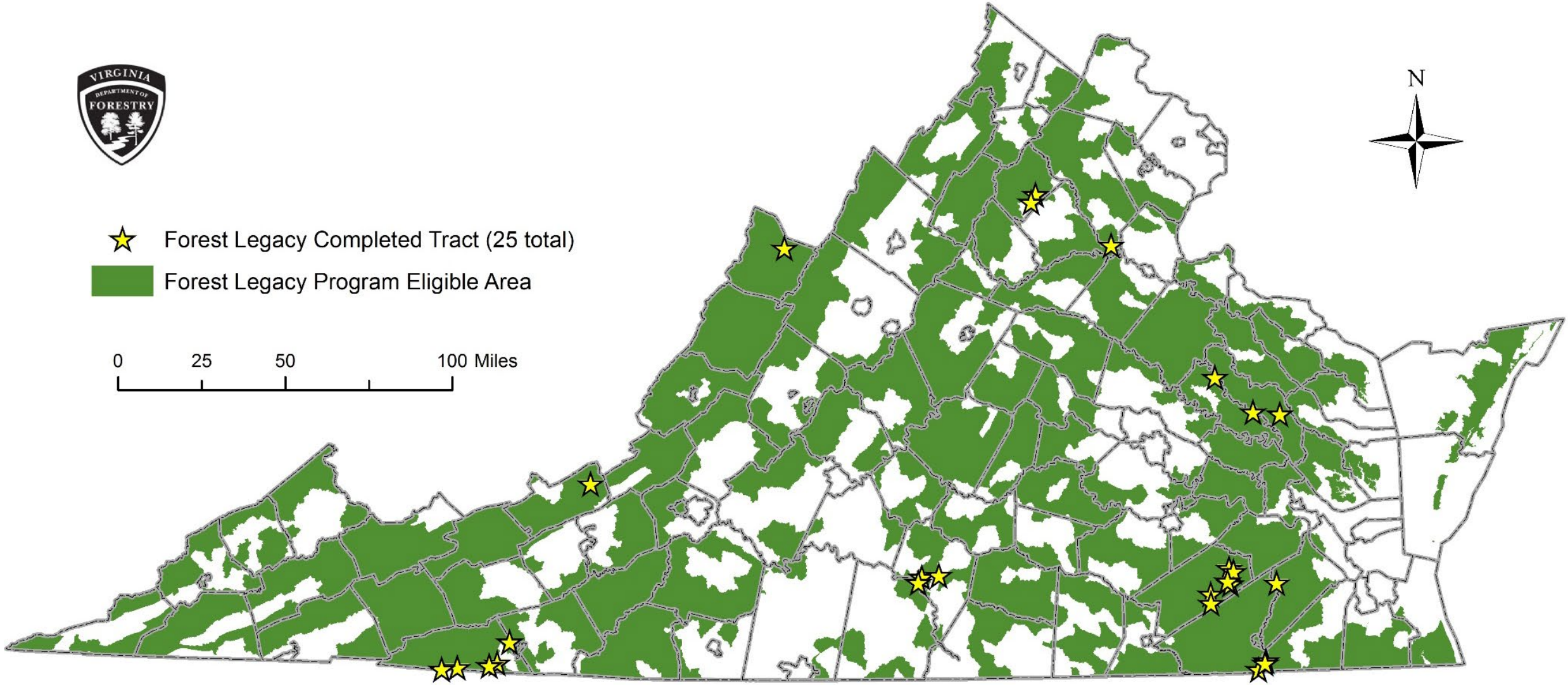
- ▶ Federal funds (US Forest Service, Land and Water Conservation Fund)
- ▶ State-administered (Department of Forestry) to support state priorities
- ▶ Large scale, typically with one or more partners
- ▶ A state agency or USFS must hold the fee/easement
- ▶ Grant up to 75% of project cost
- ▶ Tracts must be at least 75% forested & within eligible area





- ★ Forest Legacy Completed Tract (25 total)
- Forest Legacy Program Eligible Area

0 25 50 100 Miles



Roles in Forest Legacy



- ▶ DOF: applies for and manages funds, responsible for correct due diligence, holds easements or title
- ▶ Other state agencies: may hold title e.g. DWR, DCR
- ▶ USFS: works with DOF to administer program (criteria, applications, funds, documents, questions, monitoring)
- ▶ Nonprofit partners: “Project Advocates”: essential in identifying projects, guiding and supporting landowners through the process, pre-acquiring land or options

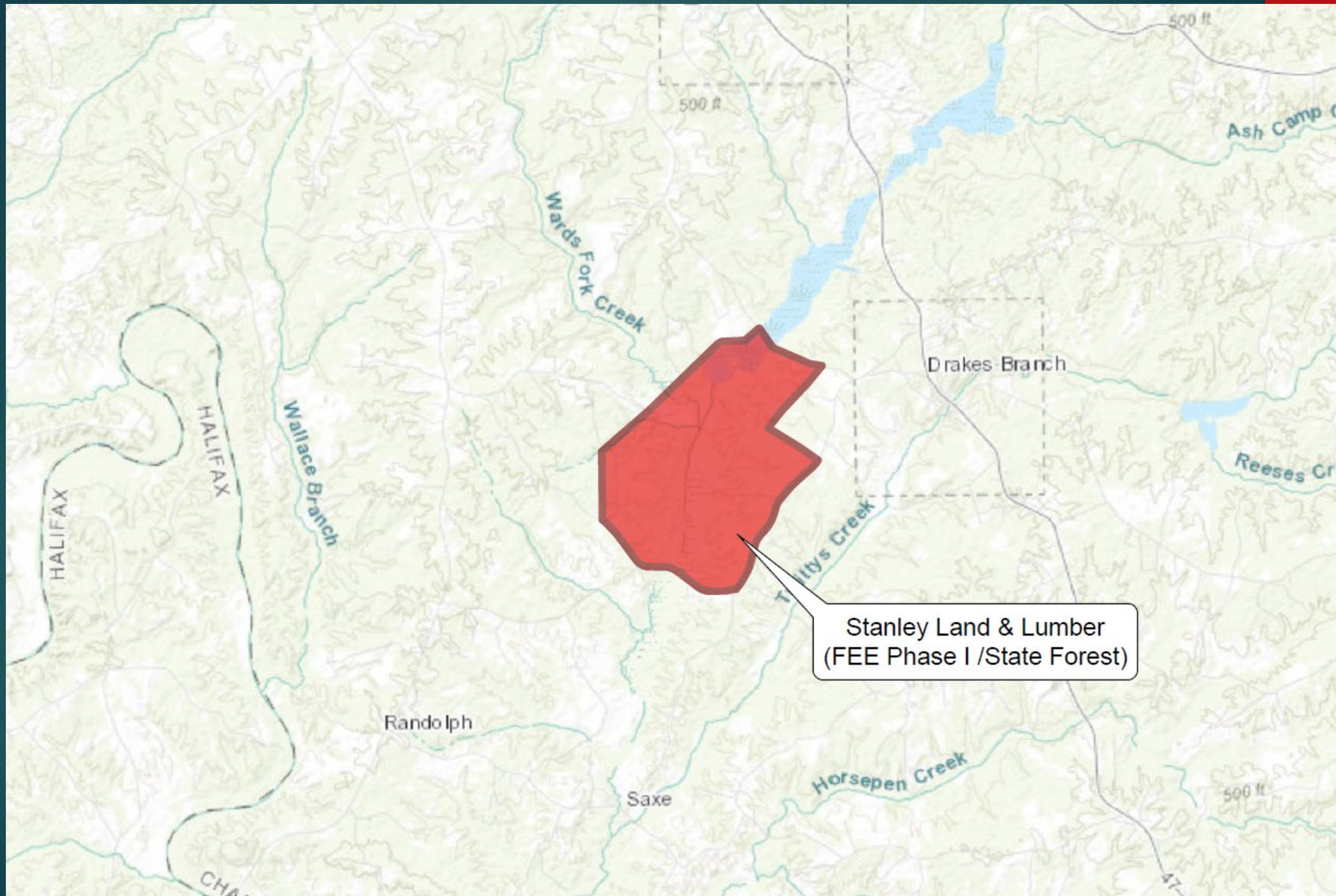
Approximate process and timeline

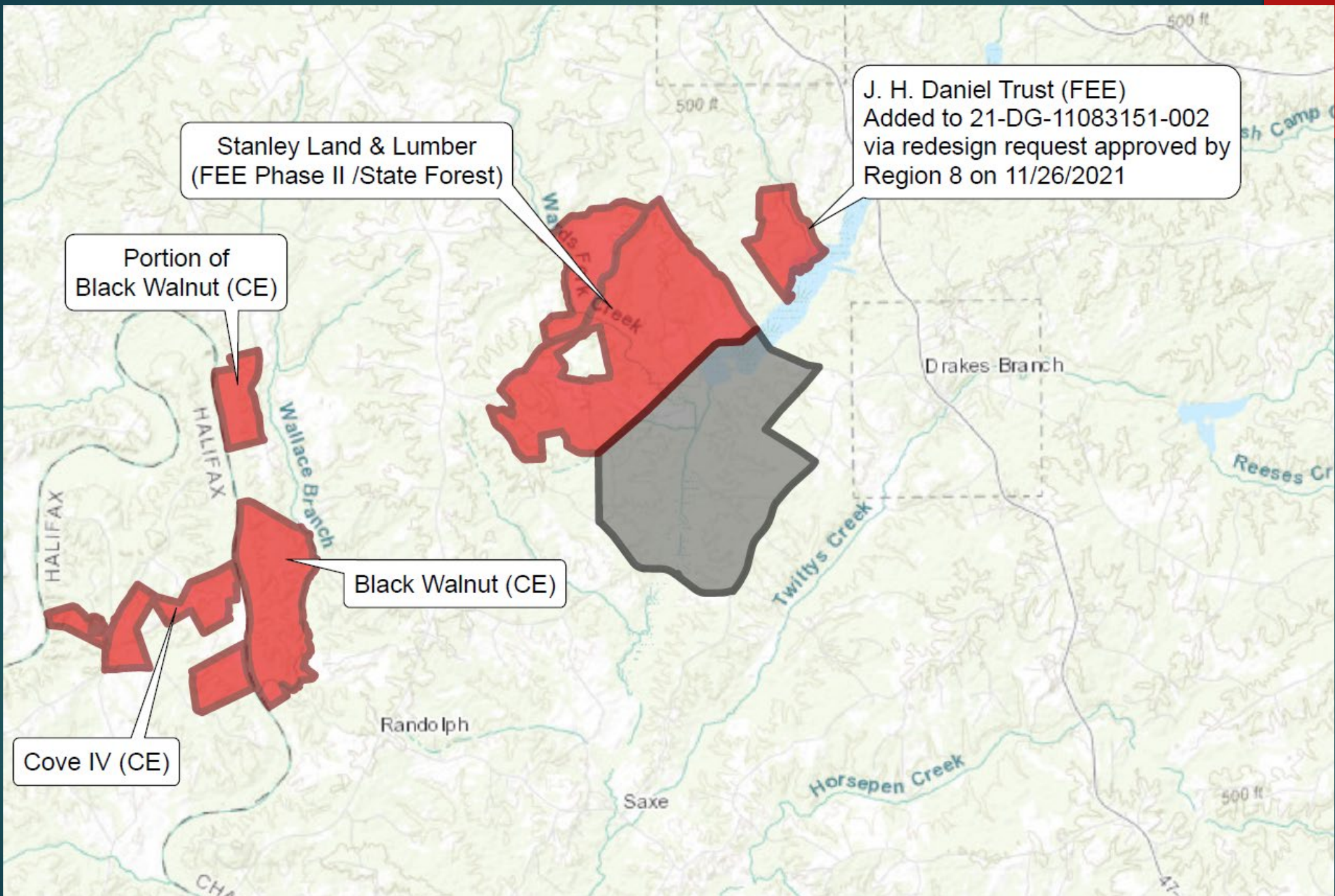
1. Cultivate the project
2. Each state can propose up to 3 projects per year
3. National ranking of projects
4. Be patient
5. Get into budget passed by Congress
6. Due diligence and closing after award of funds

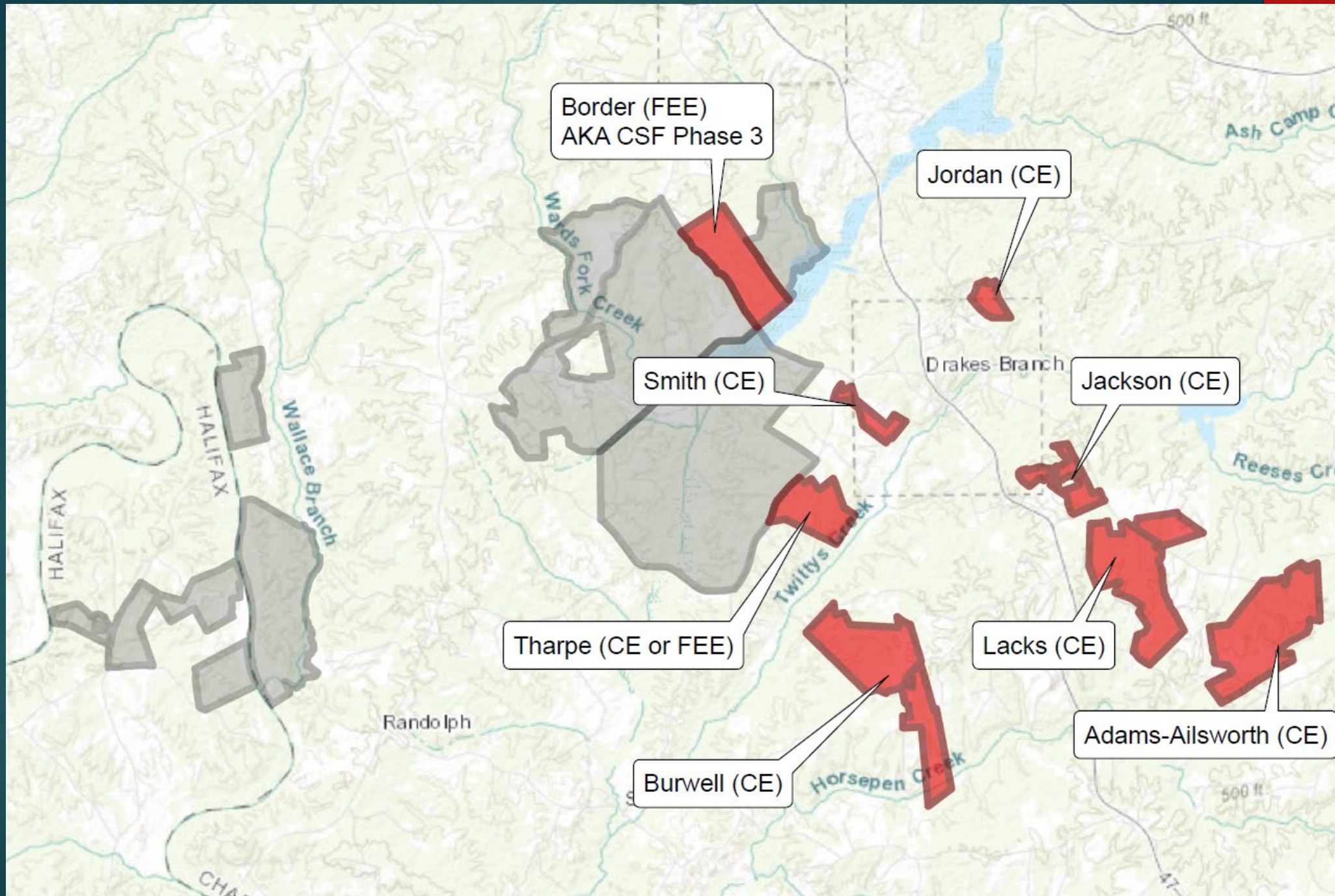
1. Prepare
2. State application April-July
3. Federal application August
4. September-???
5. Rankings go public in spring
6. Award finalized next spring
7. Project spend down over 2-3 years

What makes a successful Forest Legacy project?

- ▶ Compelling resources
- ▶ A clear threat
- ▶ Strategic value, with at least one national-level attribute
- ▶ Ready to go (once the funding arrives)
- ▶ A good map
- ▶ Phases that build on past successes







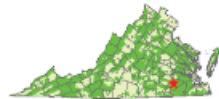
Application components

Forest Legacy Project Nottoway River Sussex County, Virginia



FUNDING HISTORY

FY 2023 Forest Legacy Program Funding	\$2,400,000
FY 2023 Non-Federal Cost Share	\$3,765,000
FY 2023 Project Costs	\$6,165,000
FY 2023 Project Acres	1,915
Forest Legacy Funding To Date	\$0
Total Project Costs	\$6,165,000
Total Project Acres	1,915



★ Project Location
■ Forest Legacy Areas

Tract Name	Size (ac)	Tract Cost	FLP Funding	Non-Fed Cost Share	Status
Cabin Stick	1,915	\$6,165,000	\$2,400,000	\$3,765,000	In Review 2023

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Virginia's NOTTOWAY RIVER Project will protect in FEE 1,915 productive forested acres dominated by loblolly pine and native bottomland hardwoods. Due to its location and soil type, the Project is threatened by conversion primarily for sand and gravel mining and solar development. It is also highly suited to longleaf pine restoration, a key objective of VA's Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR). Restoration to native longleaf pine and pine savanna will create habitat for endangered species such as the federally threatened red-cockaded woodpecker. The property contains nearly 3.5 miles of frontage on the Nottoway River, a Virginia Scenic River. Federally endangered Roanoke logperch and Dwarf wedgemussel are found in this section of the River. The Property also features 2.5 miles of frontage on Black Branch Swamp, over 220 acres of forested wetlands and 400 acres of bottomland hardwoods and will provide recreational access within an hour's drive of the Petersburg and Richmond metropolitan areas (combined population of over 1.4M). The Conservation Fund is pre-acquiring the Property to eliminate the conversion threat, and will then transfer title to the VA DWR for the creation of a new Wildlife Management Area.



The ecologically diverse Nottoway River provides superb recreation opportunity. (Photo by The Conservation Fund)

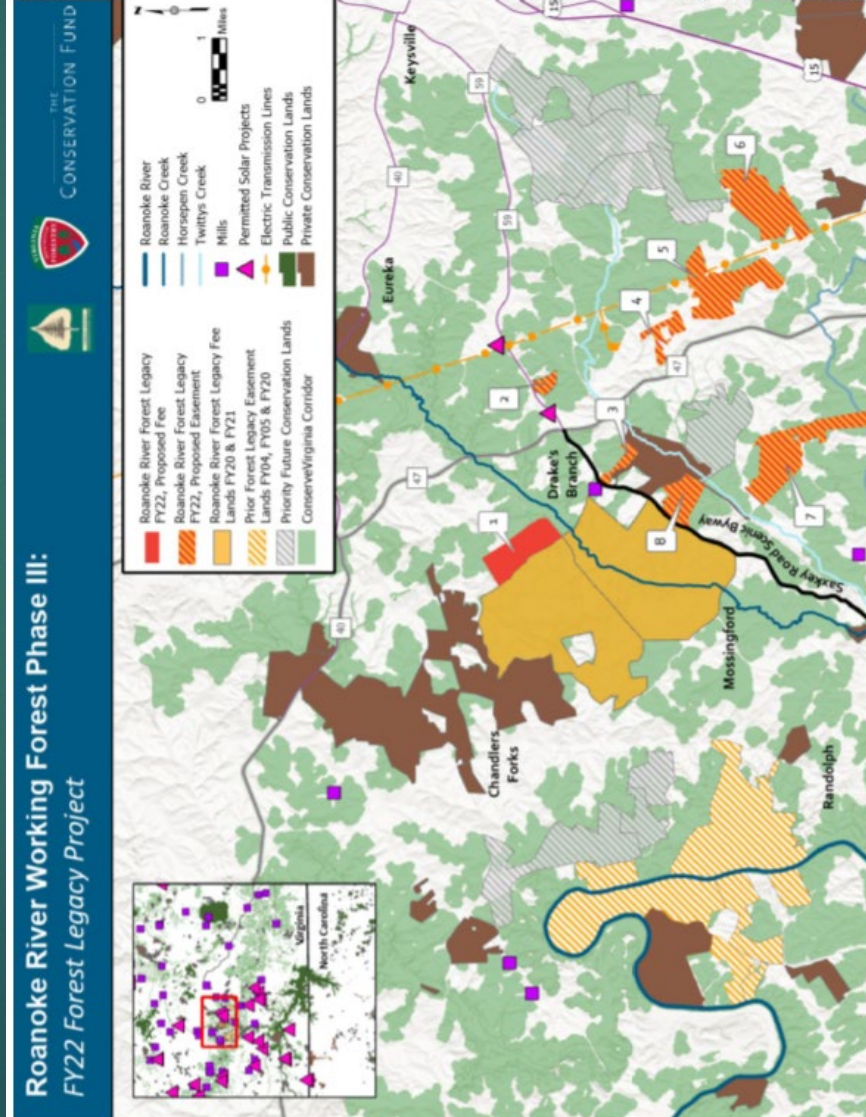
PROJECT FEATURES

Important

- ECONOMIC BENEFITS TIMBER:** The property has been managed for forest cover and timber for decades, and is currently managed to Sustainable Forestry Initiative standards to support continued timber productivity and future conversion to longleaf and pine savanna habitat.
- More than eighty percent of the property has very high site index values (85+) for loblolly pine, indicating highly productive timber potential for the future, with an average carbon capture of 4,335 MT of CO2 per year. The lower productivity soils are ideal for conversion to longleaf pine.
- Current management plan harvest prescriptions call for upcoming selective harvest and thinning of loblolly stands. This presents immediate economic benefit and is appropriately timed to support restoration to native longleaf and pine savanna, consistent with DWR's management objectives.

Roanoke River Working Forest
Virginia

Project information last updated: 4/23/2021 8:23 AM
Report prepared: 6/1/2021 9:36 AM



Protecting and promoting the natural resources, rural economy,
history and beauty of the Virginia Piedmont since 1972

October 18, 2021

Mr. Rob Farrell
State Forester, Virginia Department of Forestry
900 Natural Resources Drive, Suite 800
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Dear Mr. Farrell:

The Piedmont Environmental Council enthusiastically supports the Virginia Department of Forestry's (DOF) Southern Shenandoah Borderlands Forest Legacy Project. PEC has been working to protect land in the northern Virginia Piedmont for nearly 50 years, working with private land owners to permanently protect over 430,000 acres. The Southern Shenandoah Borderlands project is one of the most impactful conservation opportunities in the region.

In order to bring this Forest Legacy project to fruition, PEC staff have been building targeted relationships with these specific landowners for the past 20 years, reviewing a range of conservation and stewardship options. Further, we have invested well over 120 hours of staff time in just the past 6 months working in partnership with DOF staff to generate the FLP proposal. This is an important project for us because of the numerous local, state, and national conservation goals that are more fully discussed in the project summary. A few key conservation benefits from this project that are worth noting are as follows:

- Protection of private working forest lands which provide the foundation for Virginia's forestry economy - the 3rd largest industry in the Commonwealth.
- Protection of scenic views for millions of annual visitors to Shenandoah National Park, Skyline Drive (a National Scenic Byway), the Appalachian Trail (a National Scenic Trail), and people traveling along I-64 and Scenic Route 250.
- Protection of the Rivanna River headwaters which supply drinking water to 120,000 residents in Charlottesville, Albemarle County, and the University of Virginia.
- Protection of headwaters streams that feed into Chesapeake Bay, the largest estuary in the United States. This supports the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and a Federal Executive Order to protect 2 million acres in the Ches. Bay Watershed by 2025.
- Protection of these lands is consistent with the Albemarle County Comprehensive Plan which specifically calls out the need to protect "scenic views of and from the Blue Ridge Mountains...and Shenandoah National Park."

We look forward to continued effort on this nationally significant conservation project and as a Nationally Accredited Land Trust our professional staff stands ready to assist the Department of Forestry in the closing of these projects if the requested Forest Legacy funding is awarded.

Sincerely,

Christopher Miller, President





Southern Shenandoah Borderlands

- ▶ Successful FLP application for FY23
- ▶ Ranked 10th in the nation
- ▶ Requested \$7,095,000
- ▶ Example of local land trust as project advocate



View of Shenandoah Borderlands from Skyline Drive –
Moorman's River Overlook

Southern Shenandoah Borderlands



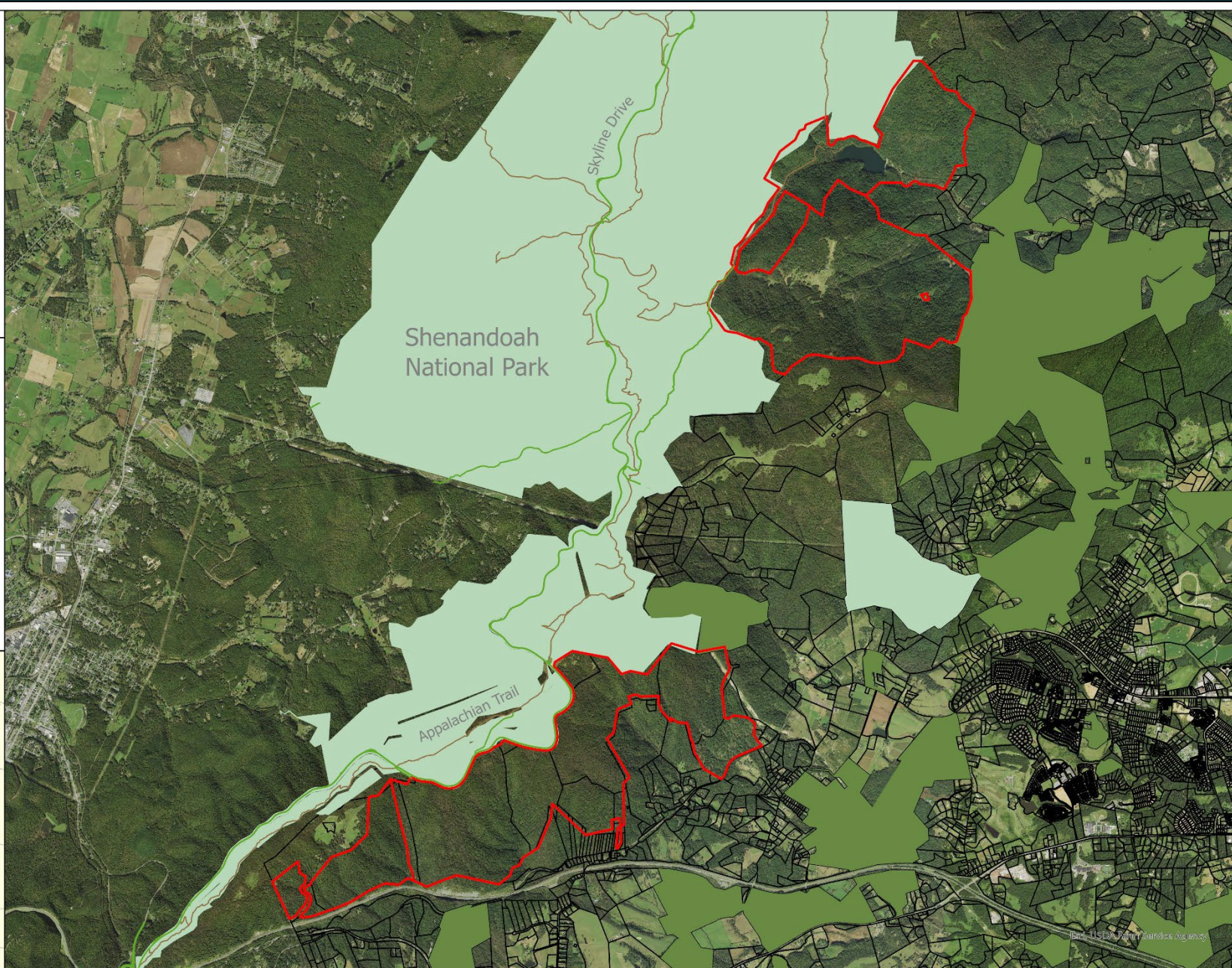
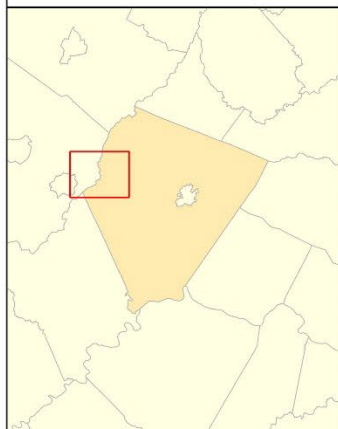
Conserved Lands

- Conservation Easements
- Publicly Owned Land

Albemarle

- Albemarle Co. Parcels
- Southern Shenandoah Borderlands
- SNP_Trails
- SNP_Roads

0 5 10 20 Miles



- ▶ 4,364 forested acres
- ▶ Buffering existing public lands
- ▶ Providing landscape connectivity
- ▶ Watershed protection
- ▶ Development pressures

What does it mean to be a project advocate?

- ▶ Having the vision – seeing the potential to plan and pursue a project
- ▶ Building relationships – set the stage
- ▶ Facilitation & Troubleshooting – be available
- ▶ Understanding other considerations:
 - ▶ Competitiveness
 - ▶ Capacity
 - ▶ Timeframe – long game!



James spiny mussel

Roanoke River Working Forest

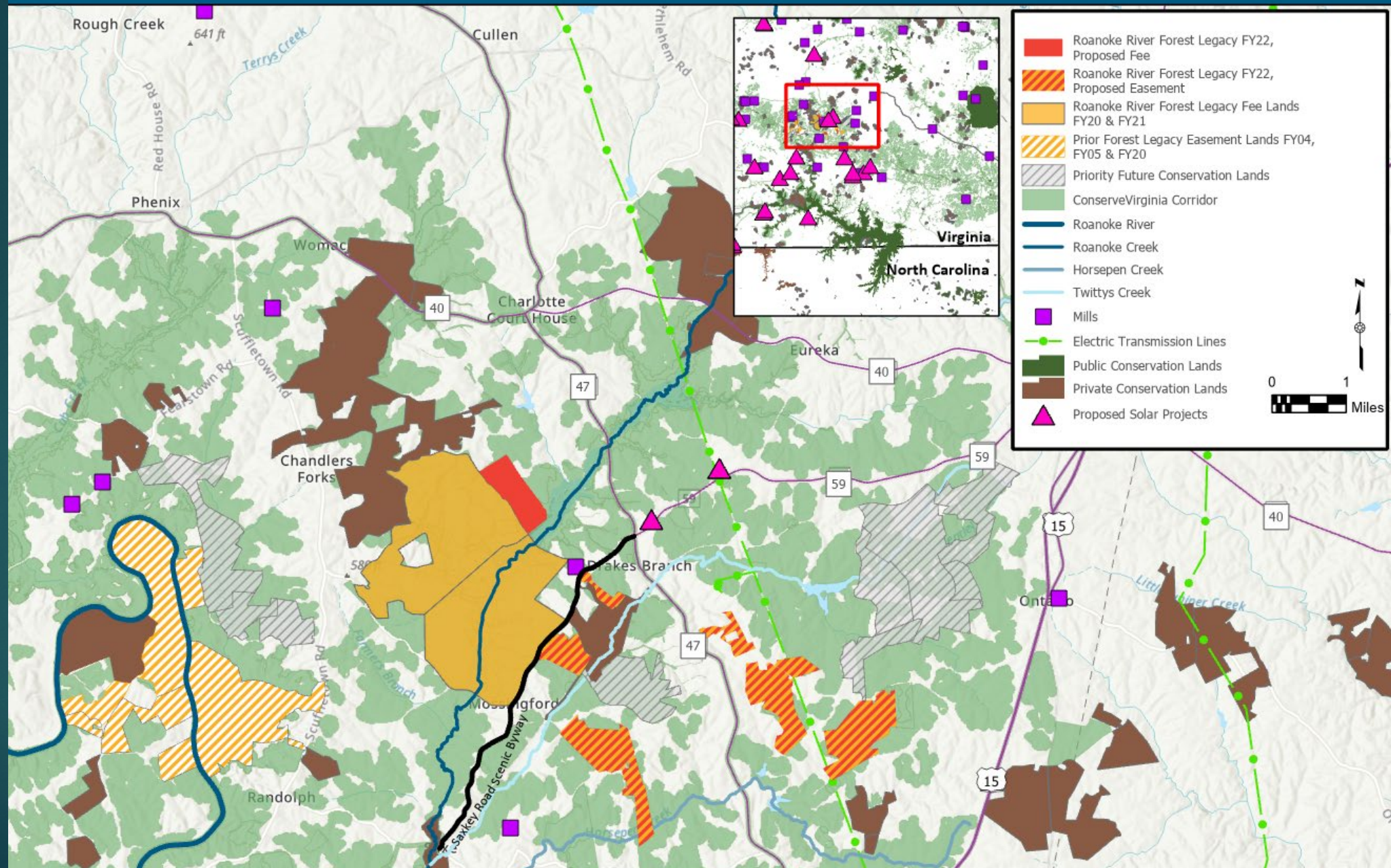
- ▶ 3 Phase application (FY20, 21, and 22)
- ▶ Matching funds from VOF, VLCF, stateside LWCF, and DOF mitigation funds
- ▶ Combination of public land (Charlotte State Forest) and private land conservation
- ▶ Long-term commitment started in 2018



Roanoke River Working Forest Phase III: FY22 Forest Legacy Project



THE
CONSERVATION FUND



Increased Forest Legacy funding

- ▶ Inflation Reduction Act of 2022: \$700 million more for Forest Legacy
 - ▶ To spend across the nation over 10 years
 - ▶ Forest Service wants to allocate over the next 5 years
- ▶ Longer lists of funded projects: already in the works
- ▶ New types of projects:
 - ▶ Keystone projects (cross-boundary, generational)
 - ▶ Tribal projects (in partnership with states)
 - ▶ Family forest (aggregations)
 - ▶ Request for applications expected in June 2023

Questions?



- ▶ Andrea Reese, interim Forest Legacy coordinator: andrea.reese@outlook.com, 203-823-8378
- ▶ Kim Biasioli, Piedmont Environmental Council: kbiasioli@pecva.org
- ▶ Natasha Skelton, The Conservation Fund: nskelton@conservationfund.org